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The Commonweal

November 24, 1950

Sexual Morals and Sexualized Morality

JEAN C. DE MENASCE

Between Two Worlds

JAMES O'GARA

Reflections on Elections

FRANCIS DOWNING

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Bear by the Tail

WHEN the United States sent troops to Korea in the first place, there was little thought that the peninsula itself was strategically important. It was simply that the time had come to take a stand.

That remains the primary UN object in Korea, even though the unopposed conquest of Tibet has taken some of the edge off our Korean warning to aggressors. The attack on Tibet has, however, made plain to the peoples of Asia the real nature of Russo-Chinese Communism. Despite our failure to protect Tibet, the UN is counting on the lesson in Korea and the growing armed strength of its non-Communist members to serve as an adequate deterrent. That would be the only way of justifying the thousands of lives that have been expended in Korea in the past five months.

When the North Koreans were finally on the run and giving every sign of disintegrating as a military force, the crossing of the 38th parallel seemed imperative. Here was a chance to finish the job, to assure Korea of unity and peace. But the picture has changed with the intervention in force of the Chinese Communists.

Once again resistance is stiff, casualties are mounting. Chinese Communist units have drawn back a little, but reinforcements of men and matériel continue to pour across the Yalu River.

How then can the Korean War be brought to a moderately acceptable conclusion? Mao's representatives approach Lake Success in a belligerent mood, hoping to present a protest against "American aggression" in Formosa. They refuse to defend their intervention in Korea before the UN. Instead they make some anti-American charges about Korea, too, as they hold that the problems of Formosa and of Korea are inseparable.

Yet these chip-on-the-shoulder ambassadors seem to offer us the best available chance for negotiating an agreement with Communist China. In order to obtain cessation of hostilities we should be willing to withhold UN forces a reasonable distance from the Manchurian border so as to remove pretended or genuine anxieties about the Yalu River dams and power installations. We should be willing to give up the idea of cleaning out all Korea and accept a plan for a certain buffer area between the new Korea and the Manchurian line. At the same time (although this would hardly be part of the agreement with Mao) American forces in Korea would be greatly reduced in numbers and would be replaced by occupation forces from a number of other UN nations.

Accompanying such a *modus vivendi* between the Chinese Communists and the United Nations in Korea, there should be a spectacular program of reconstruction and rehabilitation. That is the second demonstration which the UN is called upon to make. While the devotees of the various Asiatic nationalisms will not be convinced by what is accomplished in raising living standards in Korea alone, that ravaged peninsula provides an ideal place for showing the security, prosperity and self-determination that are in store for formerly colonial peoples in a world of law and peace and order.

THERE are plenty of disquieting elements in such a solution of the war. Would Mao keep his side of the bargain? Would he countenance a continuing and widening contrast between his own destitute millions and a relatively productive and prosperous Korea? That would depend partly on conditions in other non-Communist Asiatic lands at the time. The thing we do know is that European commitments have priority. And, even if the United States had the arms and the men, we would not want to be tied down in a protracted struggle with the Chinese Communists over the northernmost districts of North Korea.

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• NEXT WEEK •

The annual Christmas Book Issue will include literary articles, an annotated list of the season's books and a number of feature reviews.

Among the volumes to be discussed at some length are: *The Wisdom of the Sands*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, reviewed by Helene Iswolsky; *The Mill on the Po*, by Riccardo Bachelli, reviewed by Serge Hughes; *Boswell's London Journal*, 1762-1763, reviewed by G. B. Harrison.

The Silent

LAST week, C. L. Sulzberger of the New York *Times* scooped all the American newspapermen in Europe. He was permitted by the Tito government to visit Lepoglava where he interviewed Archbishop Aloysius Stepinatz in prison. This was the first time the jailed Archbishop has been allowed to speak to the press: the first direct word from him since he was imprisoned in 1946.

Sulzberger found Archbishop Stepinatz in good health, living in comparative comfort ("There *were* some difficulties," he said. "It's better that I should not speak of it."), still quietly defiant and not very communicative. Recently Marshall Tito announced that in the near future Stepinatz may be released from Lepoglava and either sent to a monastery within Yugoslavia or permitted to leave the country on condition that he never return to function as a priest. When Sulzberger told the Archbishop this, the prelate said simply: "Whether I go to a monastery, or whether I remain here, or whatever should happen to me, I am utterly indifferent. Such things depend upon the Holy Father, the Pope, and upon no one else."

Archbishop Stepinatz told Sulzberger that he had nothing to say but was content to suffer for the Catholic Church. Along with Cardinal Mindszenty, he has become a symbol of the Church's resistance to Communist totalitarianism. Things being what they are, he serves the Church—and mankind—more effectively behind bars than he would were he free to come and go as he pleased. In a very special way, he has earned the right to speak as a shepherd, even though silence is his greatest eloquence.

But Stepinatz and Mindszenty, imprisoned symbols of the claims made by the spiritual, also focus attention on millions of others who must remain silent and anonymous. These are men and women of many religious creeds and of none, of different races and nationalities, of every degree of virtue. Many of them may have suffered more than the prelates who command headline attention. Many of them do not have the intellectual and spiritual resources to call on that may have made a Mindszenty's sufferings more bearable, a Stepinatz' prison less confining.

They are the new generation of nameless, faceless ones who will, God willing, one day leave the concentration camps and political prisons as free men and tell their story to the world as the poor remaining victims of Auschwitz finally did.

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In the meantime they go unheard. But their silence is more meaningful than the glowing political speeches, the brilliant Big Lies; their sufferings are more momentous than deceitful diplomacy or careful maneuvers; their very imprisonment is more impressive than the shrewdest punditry. For they are men who are being treated as less than men, and their degradation provides the final argument against Communism.

Under the pressure of everyday events, it is easy to forget these immediate victims of Marxist totalitarianism. It is easy to forget that at this moment there are men, women and even children, in hidden places, going through the living death of a Communist concentration camp, just as less than a decade ago there were other millions passing through the Nazi hell.

All of us are inclined to think of Communist victims in the mass rather than as living, breathing persons with feelings, hopes and aspirations like our own. It isn't until someone like Archbishop Stepinatz is singled out in the press that one tries to give a thought to the others, tries to surmise what they must be feeling, thinking, hoping for—if they still have hopes. And one knows that until they are free, mankind has no right to peace. The one awful question is, can they be freed without destroying everything?

The Economic View

MR. TRUMAN has admirable talents as an administrator. The report on the economic aspects of foreign policy which former Army Secretary Gordon Gray presented last week was another sign of the tight rein which the President is attempting to hold on the bureaucratic Hydra. The report collects into a single study the meaning of our whole foreign economic policy, and lays a coherent foundation for the new action Mr. Truman and his foreign policy staff are already beginning.

The European Recovery Program, a successful and deliberate "use of our economic resources to carry out a basic objective of our foreign policy in a time of great crisis," has brought the countries of Western Europe to a degree of self-sufficiency that would have made further American aid "unnecessary by 1952, or even earlier." But the rearmament that has now taken over-riding priority in Western policy destroys this slowly-wrought balance, and the United States will have to supply economic aid, aside from munitions, for another three or four years. The amount will be substantially less than during the past year. This aid is to meet the short-run burden of the Europeans' own emergency action; to meet the gap between what the situation requires and what economic sacrifices the European nations are capable of making. Rearmament has intensified the scramble for goods and materials, so that the commodity and export controls called for in the report are most necessary.

The Gray recommendations presuppose "that the Western European countries [will] utilize their total resources more fully and continue to press toward closer economic and political relationships." This phrase is another application of American pressure, exerted as a moment when a long shadow is cast on the deliberating West.

The Point Four program which has often, in recent months, seemed lost forever in Foggy Bottom, gets major attention in the Gray report. Private investment is recommended as the most desirable form for this help, since it carries with it technological and administrative skills. The Gray recommendations are mostly devoted to encouraging and underwriting these private investments. The basic problem here is one which is outside the scope of the Gray report. It is the question of the wisdom—and of the efficacy—of making our aid to underdeveloped areas consist of private investments. There will be industrial and agricultural improvements, certainly, but the improvements will be tied to strings that eventually reach to New York City. A rather refined kind of absentee direction is encouraged.

This seems to us to be quite a long way from being the most desirable way to help young nations to their economic feet, and turn Asiatic nationalisms to democratic practices. However it is a concession to business opinion in this country (and an expression of the rather conservative nature of the present administration), and it is one which is felt to be necessary. It is just that it seems to us that policies can be too business-like. It would be a much wiser policy to place the greater emphasis on loan-capital to native-owned and directed industry, and on technical assistance. The nationalist revolutionaries of Asia, and the people of the underdeveloped and underfed parts of the world, have deeper wants than can be satisfied by business.

Copywriters' Low

IF ADVERTISERS make the correct assumptions, it is fear of the stigma of social inferiority that accounts for the biggest sales. At any rate advertising agencies have preyed on

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these fears consistently. Purchase of a car, a trunk or a bag, a best-seller, a Kentucky blend, an odor-killer or a beauty aid, hinges, as they see it, on impressing (or not offending) the Joneses. Even that reassuring symbol of science, the man with the white coat, is there to lend an air of respectability to the thing.

So when the higher-ups issued orders to turn on the heat and make people buy television sets hand over fist, the theme resorted to was hardly surprising.

Could anyone who thought twice really believe what the American Television Dealers and Manufacturers repeated *ad nauseam* over 250 American radio stations and published in full page spreads in the papers: that television is as necessary for children as fresh air, sunshine and nourishing food; that others will not play with your children unless you have a television set; that current TV fare actually supplies "vitamins for the morale and for the mind"; that lack of a television set of their own makes children mentally depressed and ill-adjusted?

The chief man-in-the-white-coat this time is Angelo Patri, "noted behaviorist and authority on child guidance," who is quoted over the air in stentorian tones to the effect that "it is practically impossible for boys and girls to hold their own if television is not available. If parents brought television to them, there would be no conflict between the haves and the have-nots."

After being offered such apples of discord and after reading the sob stuff about the television-less little girl who could not tell her parents about the "bruise deep inside," we cannot help hoping that the general public will rebel and leave the dealers and manufacturers who had anything to do with this twaddle with thousands of unsold sets on their hands. Men have been ridden out of town for less.

The Senator Is Unconvinced

IF THERE is such a thing as a nation-wide case of the jitters, something like a national anxiety neurosis, then that is the state of mind the American people could pretty easily work themselves into right now, just by dwelling overlong on the exposed and perilous whereabouts of their army overseas in Berlin, in Vienna and in Korea. In all three of these places, our troops and, in a sense, our whole country as well, are far out on a limb, living a bit dangerously and at the mercy of the Russians and the Chinese, who, if they ever really put their minds to it, could pick off our outposts with very little bother.

In the circumstances we are confronted with the usual choice of standing ground or retreating. To the best of our knowledge no one has advised a general retreat from all our advance positions. After all, "only an idiot would be an isolationist today." Those are the words of Robert A. Taft of Ohio who, if you will remember, voted against the Atlantic Treaty and the defense of Europe and would appear to be, therefore, something of a halfway isolationist or, to put the matter in Mr. Taft's idiom, his voting record would make it appear that the Senator is in possession of about half his powers.

"Is Europe our first line of defense?" the Senator asks. "Is it defensible at all? There are many things on which I have to be convinced." This is the same Taft talking who, a few months ago, after he had denounced the Atlantic Treaty as too much of a risk, proposed instead that we extend the Monroe Doctrine to cover Europe and then simply sit back and challenge Russia to come across our lines. How this bold scheme would possibly conserve the flow of American blood and dollars is an inscrutable secret that the Senator hasn't yet divulged to his bleeding and tax-weary countrymen. The suggestion was, however, a noble camouflage, a comforting rationalization of the essentially isolationist habit of Mr. Taft's mind.

Is Europe defensible? The very act of giving breath to the question itself is a dead giveaway. That question has about as much relation to our present peril as the Maginot Line has to a guided missile. The thing is, most of us had assumed that the question these days has changed from what it was when isolationism was possible. Today the question is, Where is the free man who is expendable? Who can be thrown to the wolves? If that is now the question, if every last free man is invaluable, if every free man everywhere is a part of us, then the question is not, Is he defensible?, the question is, How do we make him defensible, how do we send him help and fast?

It is hard to know what kind of convincing Mr. Taft is waiting for. It has always been our impression that John Donne put the matter very eloquently in a few simple words and it seems to us that there is still nothing quite like them: "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in Mankinde." That is why every free man in Europe has to be defensible. The time is already far gone, but perhaps the thing for the Senator to do is to send and find out for whom the bell is tolling.

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Sexual Morals and Sexualized Morality

The havoc wrought by ersatz transferences

By JEAN C. DE MENASCE

THE relations between sexual instincts and the life of the intelligence and the will, become diverse once you admit a distinction between a healthy sexual instinct merely animal and a sexual instinct that is intensified, not through physical vitality, but because of a certain ennui. In all the phases of moral life identical deviations, considered from the viewpoint of the separate act, may in reality be very diverse. One may be due to a simple caprice or a momentary rebellion; another may be traced to an overflowing, an excess of vitality; a third may be because of some defect in the nervous system, or to some intellectual defect. Finally there is the act that is clearly symptomatic and in this case the act is merely a pretext to satisfy some hidden attachment infinitely more complex and grave than the act itself.

An example will clarify these distinctions. A child might refuse to wash himself, acting from some simple caprice—he wants to sleep five more minutes, wants to while away a little time looking out the window. Another child will refuse because he is intellectually incapable of putting this act in the context of social, civilized and ordered life. Still another will refuse because he is at this moment in a state of rebellion against the world of adults; for him the rebellion against washing is a symptom and a pretext for some other obsession. And to get the child washed, it is not enough merely to make him less capricious, to be convincing about the importance of soap; it is necessary, above all, to resolve the problem of the child's relations with the world of adults.

The infractions due to the sexual instinct are obviously classifiable in these three categories. It is characteristic of modern sexual life, it seems to me, that many sexual problems of today are symptomatic rather than capricious or due to an overflowing of human vitality.

For many reasons, I refuse to consider the sexual instinct the basic instinct of human life. The aspirations of life and the aspirations of the sexual instinct cannot be identified, for man is, before all, a being of intelligence and will made for knowledge, love, political and social accomplishments, scientific exploration and artistic creation. When these fundamental aspirations are not normally satisfied, when human vitality, which aspires to a world of value and achievements, is killed, they run the risk of being taken over, absorbed and utilized by the sexual instinct. The desperate man, the solitary man, the man without the multiple satisfactions of the senses and of the spirit, falls on the sexual life. Sex, beyond its own specific pleasure, offers the possibility for vicarious satisfaction.

When modern man, lacking the satisfactions of noble ambitions, devitalized, living without power or prestige, goes through his dull monotonous life without joy or beauty, his dead existence depends on a fictitious sexual life. His sexual joys are moral joys camouflaged. He seeks to satisfy them, not having the individual or collective force to satisfy his real aspirations. These disguises of aspirations are the opposite of those which Freud indicated. It is not the sexual instinct which becomes satisfied by creative work and political and religious life—the aspirations that go with art, the political and economic life satisfy themselves through sensuality.

★

ANOTHER aspect of modern sexual life needs to be studied. Sexual demoralization is due in part to the fact that human morality—the Christian morality, which is really universal and applies to both women and men—has undergone, imperceptibly but profoundly, a process of "sexualization"—in the sense that certain virtues and certain vices are considered the physiological and psychological inheritance of man or woman. So modesty is not seen as an objective value but becomes the heritage of woman, courage becomes fundamentally a heritage of the male.

Male and female do not attain modesty and courage through efforts of the will, but modesty to woman and courage to man are seen as part of their physiological equipment. Thus the cowardly man or the immodest woman are not completely themselves, have lost something proper to their identity as man or woman. The vice is not a simple moral deviation, it is in a certain sense

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a sexual aberration. The immodest woman or the cowardly man are not judged as being simply immoral but are considered as less man and less woman.

This process of "sexualization" has made itself felt on numerous levels of moral and religious life. In the Christian life we have even seen a kind of total upheaval. In antiquity only the male was considered capable of the purity of a religious being; religion was looked up to as part of the masculine equipment. Primitive Christianity triumphed over this sexualization. It gave to women the right to live the religious life and the life of purity, on a par with man. For these conquests Christians had to struggle, suffering the derisions of the pagan world. But in the end the battle was won. Now this victory has become the point of departure for a complete reversal. Today the pendulum has reached the other extreme: the religious being almost by nature, the pure being almost by nature, is the woman; the male is the brutal, the irreligious being, and normally libidinous.

While in the religious life many aspects of the moral life — purity, tenderness, etc. — have become womanly things, the characteristics of virility have, little by little, grown pale.

The boy does not become a man, is not initiated and accepted in the society of males through a process of activity—sports, economics or politics. He does not win his spurs of manhood by going fishing, or hunting, or mastering horseback riding. Nowadays it is sexual activity which confirms him in his masculinity. Sexual life is the only life of initiation, the only masculine realization. Thus sexual activity has become the fruit of anxiety and uncertainty.

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TO ADORN oneself is feminine, to remain at home is feminine, modesty is feminine and the modern woman who seeks to liberate herself from these characteristics, considered part of her sex, believes herself obligated to alienate herself from her sex if she wants to realize political and economic activity.

This evasion of her own sex, identification with the masculine world, would explain perhaps why the first suffragettes unconsciously struck male attitudes and wore masculine clothes.

The modern woman is sexual not merely through sexual vitality but by the desire for a masculine life. As sexual life since the Puritanism of the nineteenth century has been considered a masculine thing (a nice girl in that era was not even supposed to feel the stimuli of the flesh) woman's sexual life today is part of a group of masculine attributes to which she aspires. It forms a part of a whole that is not primarily human nor logical but sociological. Therefore whether for man or woman, sexual life has become an anxiety and an anguish.

If we look at the problem from the point of view of virtue, we see the same peril, due to this "sexualization." The religious life and the life of chastity, it has been said, have become feminine virtues. Those responsible for this fact are perhaps the medieval poets. Already in Dante, we find the faith and the religious life symbolized in Beatrice.

At any rate, whatever reason one might name as the cause of this process, the chaste man in our society is not considered chaste because of his temperament or his will power; he is considered to be mystically initiated, incorporated into the feminine world. Unjust men may disapprove of the just man, make fun of him, but they will not say: "What kind of man are you? You act like a woman." But the chaste man, either violently or deceitfully, is ostracized from his group. Something happens to him similar to what happened to a man in England a hundred years ago who loved fine objects, pretty ornaments and delicate conversation: he is considered effeminate. Sexual anguish is perhaps better traced to this sociological explanation than to the one furnished by materialistic psychiatrists explaining neuroses.

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FROM these simple considerations one can pass on to practical conclusions. Moralizing about sexual life in our world should be directed to satisfactions rather than mortifications. Naturally we are speaking not of superficial but human satisfactions which provide an end for the profound aspirations of life. Or, more exactly, not *an* end but *the* end—fulfillment of these aspirations.

Some educators have seen nothing in certain activities but a distraction: "Work, play football and think less of women!" they tell the young man. These activities are supposed to be like the toreador's cape that distracts the bull.

If instead one takes into account what has been said, he will understand why a man who has a satisfying way of life—artistic satisfactions, athletic satisfactions, etc.—a man who has a *human* life, humanly satisfying, finds in all these ends the satisfactions he might have looked for some place else.

Here sexual life will take its proper place and will become subject to an organizing prudence. It will have to be disciplined, come to terms with other human energies, but it will occupy a definite position in the total architecture of existence. Naturally, cases of intemperance will be found among persons preoccupied only with the sexual as others are interested only in business or sports. But these will be aberrations—the normal man is not monomaniacal but an orchestra of many ideas.

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MORALIZING about sexual life should avoid everything that is called, in a terminology that might be deemed equivocal, transference and sublimation. There is nothing more dangerous than transferring to one field the aspirations unsatisfied in another; to transfer, for example, the affection which can no longer be poured out on one's own children upon adopted children.

The open-hearted man eats because he wants to eat, not because he is unhappy; he works to produce, not to escape something. Monsters arise in the collective life, such as Nazism and Communism, when the sexual life becomes a thirst for power and a substitute for religious feelings.

The attempt at transference gives rise to a monster, repression to a being broken in its very depths.

The work of moralizing consists in putting clarity and truth in one's self and in others. It can be admitted that sexual desires and other aspirations from time to time influence each other, but with calmness and humor these influences are unmasked for what they are. I strive to love Henry because Henry is amiable and not because I am running away from the anxiety of having killed Peter. Chastity is loved because my interests, my ends, my forces, my equilibrium, my preferences demand this discipline and this limitation and not because I am fleeing from the acceptance of the fact that I am a rational being in the body of a beast.

When sexual life and political life are no longer poisoned with ersatz transferences, that which remains of an anti-social nature in me comes under the domination of the intelligence. Having eliminated all semblances of sociological and psychological moralizations and demoralizations, the long and difficult true work has to begin: to specify the virtues with their formal object; to accept, dominate, develop the raw mass of one's self. Chastity becomes the fruit of a general preference for spiritual things over material things—a sense of responsibility, a desire for a generous, harmonious social life.

Chastity is loved because it gives clarity to the intelligence, because both the interior and the social life require love and love requires fidelity, and because, in this field as in all others, violence, caprice and fanaticism are defeat. The chaste man does not believe himself to be more chaste when his anxieties and needs no longer furnish obscene fantasms to his imagination and he has introduced into his human and moral life—the life of values, affections and friendships—a certain harshness and bitterness. He prefers to let these poor underground forces struggle like a worm whose head has been cut off and does not die with the blow but in slow agony.

SO THEY TELL ME

Reflections on Elections

PART of vanity's sustenance is got by being a Sunday morning quarterback. In politics the practice takes the form of post-mortem pontificating. The first is a normal exercise; the second is filled with danger which I hope to avoid.

But I cannot refrain from making several observations on our recent elections. It is a matter of great pride that so many Americans resisted the normal temptations of off-year elections and, this year, went to the polls.

Europe may be a prey to anxious fear, however exaggerated, and the net result of the Senate races may properly make us sad and even afraid. Nonetheless the fact signally remains that intelligence was still at work. Will was at work in our ballot boxes. Almost no scandal was reported about the voting, no force, no violence, no electoral corruption from San Francisco to Staten Island. The question discussed in political science classrooms: Where does sovereignty lie in the United States? has, once more, been demonstrably answered.

The new Mayor of New York must remain a symbol of the people's power, a rebuke to the political boss callous and calculating. A deliberate arrangement to remove Mayor O'Dwyer, provide a mayoralty election during a gubernatorial campaign, satisfy racial and religious expectations, defeat Thomas E. Dewey and guarantee a Democratic sweep was defeated by an act of moral indignation, an independent rebellion. It is, I think, impossible to overestimate this victory of the relatively machineless election of Mayor Impellitteri. The myth that the machine is invincible is again destroyed. This fact must surely have significance far beyond the borders of New York.

★

THE fact that Mr. Dewey was re-elected may not make all of us happy. But that his Democratic opponent was defeated, inasmuch as he was nominated in calculated obeisance to some antique pattern of presumed racial or religious grouping, is not necessarily the unhappiest of facts. Intelligence refused its allegiance to the patterned trick, intelligence demanded demonstrated competence, intelligence rejected the supposed imprisonment in ancient prejudice. Above all else it repudiated the cold assumption that men could be moved around, that the electorate was composed of instinct, that the sense of outrage was blunted, that this election was another game of chess.

Senator Lehman's vote against the McCarran-Kilgore Bill was honored for the brave and independent act that it was. New York elected Lehman, elected Dewey, rejected Lynch and chose Impellitteri. The expectation

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that men would vote a straight ticket, that the kind of emotional allegiance that demands still was operative, that the intelligence it requires was absent, was rebuked. All this highly selective voting—many men, for example, who voted the ALP ticket for governor, chose Lehman for their Senator—is an illuminating thing in any post-election gloom. There is, besides, the defeat of Vito Marcantonio.

Even the re-election of Senator Taft, the fact itself and the nature of his campaign, has its salutary aspects. For it has proved that labor leaders cannot deliver labor's vote, whether in Ohio or in Illinois or anywhere else. It proves—no matter how drastic the demonstration—that the silent assumptions of our labor leaders were wrong. The simple fact of the matter is that there is, as yet at any rate, no such thing as labor's vote. "The Worker" does not exist, any more than economic man exists, or political man exists. Only man exists. He defines his own character, he chooses the adjectives which describe him; and they are many and they are inconstant. It may be a very healthy thing for the labor leader to discover that the assumptions be made about the *worker* are exactly the same as those made about *the voter* by the old line boss, and that the one is as false as the other.

The man in the shop is a man. He lives in many worlds, is a part of many institutions, owes and yields up multiform allegiances, is prey to many emotions, knows many joys, suffers many fears. His union neither describes nor encloses his life.

The Union man is conscious that he joined it so that his stature would increase, the shadow of his spirit lengthen, the area of his freedom, union-won, widen. He must, on November 7, I think, have had the feeling that all of this was being jeopardized, lessened a little under the drive, the pressure, the rhetoric, the near coercion. He resented it. And, in Ohio, a good many of them showed it by voting for Senator Taft, while at the same time returning Governor Lausche to office on the Democratic ticket.

★

THE non-union man, too, the unorganized electorate —what did it think of labor's drive? The answer is clear. Labor must learn subtlety, mute its tone, write a cleaner script, appear less awesome and less furious.

Labor's political chiefs, Jack Kroll of the CIO, and Joseph Keenan of the AFL seem to be satisfied with their expressed belief that reverses in Korea explain their defeats. I hope that they are merely speaking for the record, and that they realize that the meaning of the election goes deeper than that, that they are capable of learning, that theirs is not a monolithic world.

There is, of course, the fear. In many ways the election was a frightening thing. Senator Taft who had backed the malevolent McCarthy, found, in his campaign, that the President was "soft on Communism." McCarthy spoke in Wisconsin and Senator Wiley won. McCarthy spoke in Maryland and Senator Tydings was defeated. Nixon spoke in California, and the voice was the voice of Jacob, and Mrs. Douglas lost. The honeyed and the unctuous Dirksen spoke, with McCormick's voice, in Illinois and Dirksen won.

The voice of McCarthy was abroad in the land and it was now as it was in the beginning a poisoned and a fearful thing. It went on forever making unproved charges, forever irresponsible, forever merely free of libel; it went on exploiting the insecure, the anxious, the confused, and the afraid. It went on attacking Alger Hiss, assaulting Mr. Acheson, attacking perverts, attacking unnamed Communists, attacking Yalta, praising MacArthur as if he were God and McCarthy had invented him; it went on, the voice, and it harassed the discontent, and it assigned guilt, and it called names and it laid the blame; and it talked to the emotions, and it was like balm and it assuaged. In every case where it made foreign policy an issue it won. It told no truth, and held no answers, but it won. It is like the taste of pennies in the mouth; it fills me with fear. We have known demagogues in our political history, but this is a special kind —an evil kind, a deliberate kind, it adds falseness to the already false. It represents the other side of the election coin. It is the spurious and the counterfeit. It would be legal tender nowhere in any world where reason was and where intelligence was operative. Yet men took it as though it were legal tender and had value and was clean and bright and new, and had been minted honestly.

★

MY own degree of tolerance is high, I take it, or I would not have survived these many years. I no longer expect political campaigns to be educational exercises, essays towards the truth. But that McCarthy should be believed, that Senator Brewster would equate the first world war, the second world war and Korea with the fact of Democratic administrations and be taken seriously, that he would find in the elections a mandate for the removal of Mr. Acheson because he did not or does not "get tough," that these Republicans, like the Communists, offer "peace," and a harder policy in respect of China all at the same time, with something called "economy" thrown in—and that this would make a difference in major political contests is, surely, a profoundly disturbing thing.

The first sign of the economy, by the way, has already been made visible. Congressman Barden, so they tell me, plans to ask Congress to repeal the Walsh-Healy Act which, as you know, fixes minimum wage and hour standards for men who work on government contracts.

Even Senator Taft who is offered to us as a man of integrity and intellect has found a special meaning in his own triumph. It is that the people of Ohio "have rejected President Truman's program for imposing a socialistic planned economy on the American people and expressed their lack of confidence in his foreign policy and the State Department."

Disraeli used to say that it was the function of the opposition party to oppose. Dizzy moved with nimble mind and nimble feet—but he never suggested that it was not the function of the opposition to propose. The Republicans who won last Tuesday represent mostly, I think, an outfit we would be better off without.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

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Communications

McCarran's Blunderbuss

White Plains, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: While commending Common Cause, Inc., for its fight for civil rights, and Mr. Christopher Emmet, chairman of the board of Common Cause, Inc., for his fine article, "McCarran's Blunderbuss," [Nov. 3] I feel compelled to say a word regarding one of Mr. Emmet's paragraphs. The idea in the paragraph is genuine and appealing, but it is misconceived. It reads:

> As for the bill's alleged anti-Communist effect, it prevents our offering asylum to Russian or satellite officials, officers and technicians who risk their lives if they desert the Soviets, and for whom the greatest inducement to do so is the hope that they may eventually find sanctuary in America.

This argument ought not to be advanced as a reason for repealing the McCarran bill; for, it seems to me that it is one of the strongest reasons for retaining the bill. Soviet apostates are worthless in our country, but invaluable in their own. Their escape is for private reasons, and for personal security; it is not reasoned from civic conscience. They are not "deserting the Soviets;" they are deserting the democrats. One by one they leave their countrymen to the darkness and despair of Communism. Who is to lead them out of darkness when all the leaders are gone? What else can these countrymen do but resign themselves to the Communists, when their leaders have declared by their flight that it is hopeless to fight and useless to resist?

It has always been our fondest hope that the people of the satellite nations would some day throw off the communist yoke and regain the reins of their own governments. We have always hoped for an internal and autonomous solution. For these hopes agree with our democratic principle of self-determination. But how in heaven's name can these people find their way if they are left as headless herds? They can remember martyrs very well; but deserters they had rather forget.

My reaction to Mr. Emmet's paragraph was most intense, probably because I read it riding home on the train, not half an hour after having seen a play at Columbia University. The play was Euripedes' "Iphigenia in Aulis." In the end (the ending was the one Euripedes likely used, not the one later tacked on) Iphigenia rose and went forth to the altar of sacrifice, knowing, and all of her countrymen knowing, that her sacrifice was absolutely necessary to pacify the gods, to bless Agammemnon's purpose, and to save his people from perdition. Here, I thought, is a magnificent creature, with civic conscience and love for the commonweal. . . .

WILLIAM TALBOT

The Stage

THE IBSEN GIRL

IN AT LEAST one notable respect, Samson Raphaelson's "Hilda Crane" brings the drama of Ibsen full circle. The Ibsen heroine, whether in the Norwegian's own plays or in those of his imitators, was a rebel against the conventional social code, particularly as it defined her role as wife and mother. When the restrictions imposed upon her became intolerable, she was likely to assert her freedom and bring down the third-act curtain by committing suicide. Hilda Crane, heroine of Mr. Raphaelson's play, finds herself in revolt against all the freedoms which the Ibsen girl finally won. Wanting only to be a wife and mother, and discovering that too many freedoms have made this impractical, she asserts her conventional femininity and brings down the third-act curtain by committing suicide.

In some ways this is a cheerful note. It may be that we are through with the underprivileged woman, and are ready to take up the underprivileged man. It may mean that, as husbands, we are coming to a time when we can stop throwing our used socks into wastebaskets and turn them over to wives who really yearn to mend them. I doubt it, but Mr. Raphaelson thinks we may hope. At the very least, if we are in future to be spared Hedda and the vine leaves and Nora and the check-book, our evenings in the theatre may become more bearable.

It would be even more encouraging to report that the form, as well as the content, of the Ibsen-style play had undergone a change. But in every other respect "Hilda Crane" remains pure Ibsen. Here is the same careful but earthbound prose. Here is the same attention to a social problem rather than to persons, or to an action for the sake of its own interest. And here, above all, is the effort to write tragedy without the conditions of tragedy being present.

★

HILDA CRANE, like the Ibsen heroines, is the victim of environmental pressures, rather than of any failure within herself. It is Mr. Raphaelson's point that society now pushes its well-meaning women into the full use of their freedoms, and so denies them the unified and productive life they might have had in a valid and lasting marriage. But society is the villain, as it always was with Ibsen. Hilda is no more responsible for her own plight than Nora or Hedda or Mrs. Alving were. And tragedy is unthinkable without personal responsibility. It is always a matter of self-destruction, rather than destruction by impersonal forces over which one has no control. When the victim is wiped out by a purely external force, whether it be a social pressure or a careening truck, the result is pathetic, not tragic. Mr. Raphaelson has not been able to alter the Ibsen formula enough to keep Hilda out of that classification.

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The result is that the final scene, Hilda's suicide, is too much for what has gone before. She has not the stature as a person to put us through the enormity of her final act. She has not been sufficiently responsible for her own failure to make us feel that her ending is due her, and was inevitable from the beginning. Because it does not follow from a necessary dramatic logic, the conclusion of the play is merely depressing, and tends to make us forget some of the good things which have gone before it.

★

ACTUALLY, the play is a far more than competent example of its kind. If we are to continue to have the prose problem play, with its substitution of journalism for poetic insight, Mr. Raphaelson has this time handled it as well as any. The author does not dawdle over the exposition of his thesis but keeps the action moving at an absorbing clip and is able to deliver the necessary big scenes with considerable impact. With the exception of the last scene, you will probably find the evening consistently interesting. It is further well directed by Hume Cronyn and sharply played by a good cast. Jessica Tandy may have been ill-advised to follow her role in *Streetcar* with one having so many surface similarities to it, and she still has not developed an emotional top, but she is attractive and skilful. Frank Sundstrom is exceptionally good as the libertine who helps destroy her, and Evelyn Varden does a remarkable job of finding the precisely right tone for an extremely difficult scene. Cast as a domineering mother-in-law, and having got her share of laughs early in the play, she is asked, at a climactic moment in the second act, to feign illness. If the illness is too obviously feigned, it will become comic and destroy the dramatic tension of the scene. If it is not feigned at all, but entirely real, it will destroy sympathy for the heroine who is at that moment giving her a tongue-lashing. Miss Varden has been able to balance herself between these two pitfalls, and without underplaying, and the scene becomes a minor triumph in the art of acting.

You will not be bored at "Hilda Crane," even though it falls short of Mr. Raphaelson's intentions. (*At the Coronet.*)

THE BARRIER

LANGSTON HUGHES has fashioned a diffuse libretto from his earlier and more successful play, *Mulatto,* Jan Meyerowitz has given it a score which seems to be arbitrary in its choice of what shall and what shall not be sung, and Lawrence Tibbett and Muriel Rahn head a company which is not distinguished for its acting ability. Doris Humphrey is credited with the staging, but, since she has followed three or four other directors at the task, she cannot really be held responsible.

To get past the libretto, let it be said that it offers a good many dramatic possibilities: there is a father-son struggle, a mother-son struggle, and a man-mistress struggle, each of them complicated by miscegenation. But the narrative simply takes a sideswipe at all of them and gets the juice out of none. It was the acting that fascinated me. Where Menotti has been carefully and successfully teaching opera how to become more dramatic, the production of "The Barrier" is ostentatiously busy making drama more operatic. The stage is filled with posture without feeling, deliberate arias addressed to the audience, and even one of those trios in which each singer pretends that the others are not on stage. (*Closed November 4 at the Broadhurst.*)

Readers are hereby advised that the Menotti opera, *The Consul,* is now on tour and not to be missed.

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

Great Heart and Big Nose

WHAT you may wonder most when you see the movie of *"Cyrano de Bergerac"* is why Hollywood never made it before. (I realize that the property rights to the play were extremely complicated, what with the Rostand family, Brian Hooker the translator, and various other people being involved; but Hollywood money is seldom deterred by insurmountable obstacles.) In any case "Cyrano" is a natural for the movies with its colorful period, fancy costumes, dueling, moving dialogue, romantic theme and heart-breaking story. And what a hero! "A soldier, poet, philosopher, musician, playwright and the best swordsman in Paris"—so the script describes him; and so actor Jose Ferrer makes him. But, and this is the big "but" in Cyrano's life, he has an oversized nose, a nose so large that it would make Jimmy Durante's look like a small model of the ordinary proboscis. And it is this nose which is as important to the story as any other thing in it; for Cyrano's nose had much to do with the formation of his character; to compensate for his deformity Cyrano became an intellectual, a first-rate fighter, a rebellious free-thinker; but alas he also developed pride, a quick temper, an oversensitive, fearful shame of his own physiognomy.

And this is the swashbuckling hero of this wonderful movie. We see him in action at the Théâtre de Bourgogne—reciting and dueling. We see him defending his good friend the pastry cook (Lloyd Corrigan), killing a dozen ruffians in the onslaught. We see him hopelessly in love with the beautiful Roxane (Mala Powers) who asks him to watch over the man she loves (William Prince). We see him composing letters and serenading Roxane for this handsome baron. We see him in heroic action against the Spaniards. And finally we see him fifteen years later when he comes to the convent to die

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at Roxane's feet—in one of the loveliest, tear-jerking scenes in all literature.

We owe a vote of thanks to Stanley Kramer for bringing "Cyrano" to us in a movie and for giving it such a fine production. It has its faults: I found the battle scenes too long and theatrical, and the supporting players too obviously dressed up for a costume play. But most of the faults stem back to Edmond Rostand who wrote a theatrical tour de force that really requires only one main actor: everyone else feeds him lines and assists by adding to the illusion. Carl Foreman wrote a good script from the Hooker translation; however he could do little to make Roxane, Baron Christian, De Guiche and the others real people. Mala Powers looks beautiful as the girl, but you may wonder why everyone, including Cyrano, fell so head-over-heels in love with her. And William Prince makes Christian properly handsome, but I doubt if anyone could sell this role to twentieth-century audiences. And so on down the line.

★

AT the top of the cast stands Jose Ferrer, and he gives an unforgettable performance as the most manly, poignant, dashing, big-hearted character in drama. The mood is greatly helped by the fine score composed and directed by Dimitri Tiomkin, and by the cinematic direction of Michael Gordon who was successful in giving the picture force and movement even in scenes that could have been smothered in talk. Let us not forget that when Rostand's talk is good, it is very good; and in the famous balcony scenes when Cyrano impersonates Christian, or in the duel when Cyrano composes poetry as he fights, or in the death scene when Roxane finally realizes it was Cyrano she loved for his soul and not another man for his outward beauty, we are treated to some very fine talk indeed. Even if we have to admit that Jose Ferrer, with his inspired interpretation of the seventeenth-century poet-soldier waving a white plume of freedom, is the whole show, we also have to admit it's a great show and one not to be missed.

★

MOVIEGOERS who like to see their fighting and romancing in a period closer to the present may find their thrills in some of the outdoor dramas now on our screens. *"Devil's Doorway"* is no ordinary western. Set in Wyoming Territory shortly after the Civil War, it follows the plight of Indians who get quite a shoving around. This is not an action of which our historians can be too proud, and while Guy Trosper's script allows the Indians to carry on some vicious and bloody warfare, it also points out who settled the land first and who was getting the raw end of the deal. Robert Taylor gives a nice, straightforward performance as an Indian who returns from the war a sergeant-major to find his people being persecuted. Caught between decent sheepherders who want to homestead the land, and evil politicians who want to make money, the Indians fight a losing battle. Most of the Whites are stereotyped characters, but the film on a whole really tries to take the side of the much-maligned Indians. Director Anthony Mann manages to offer some blood-curdling battles in between the serious business.

★

"COPPER CANYON" also has to do with the post-Civil War period in the West. (What would Hollywood do without this era of lawlessness and violence?) This time the Northerners and Southerners are still fighting it out in Nevada Territory. The fight has to do with mines and claims and working conditions and skullduggery on the part of crooks. But the plot is so complicated I was never sure which side was for what; and the cast which includes Ray Milland, Hedy Lamarr, Macdonald Carey, Mona Freeman and other screen worthies seemed completely wasted. If horse opera clichés are your only requirement, you'll find 'em here.

★

EVEN when Director John Ford does what he has done before, he does it so well it bears re-seeing. *"Rio Grande"* has many of the old Ford elements: fast riding, tough fighting, vivid characterization, warm sentiment. But I think men in particular are going to like the combination this time. Although the movie starts slowly in developing its themes in a post-Civil War (again!) fort in the Southwest, it rises to a big climax and fast finale. The fort's commander (John Wayne) long estranged from his Southern wife (Maureen O'Hara) is not too happy when his son (Claude Jarman, Jr.) flunks out of West Point and arrives as an ordinary trooper at the fort. Wayne has further cause for discomfort when Maureen comes to take the boy home. Interspersed between all the sentimental husband-wife-son stuff are some exciting Indian battles; and Ben Johnson, Harry Carey, Jr., Chill Wills, Victor McLaglen and others are on hand to help with the rough riding and masculine atmosphere. I'm afraid, however, that Mr. Ford is inclined to be a touch too romantic about war and its horrors.

★

EVEN more romantic, and I think more dangerous because it is closer to the present, is *"American Guerrilla in the Philippines,"* a film vaguely based on Ira Wolfert's novel, but having little to do with reality. It is hard to say what went wrong with this movie. Director Fritz Lang has given it some terrifically exciting individual scenes about our men who were stranded in the Philippines after the escape of General MacArthur. We see how these men and Filipinos became guerrillas and gave the Japs plenty of trouble. But for some reason this film as a whole has a phoney air; perhaps it's the pretty Technicolor, perhaps it's the romance (between Tyrone Power and Micheline Prelle), or perhaps it's because the sum of the various exciting scenes make war seem glamorous in a Rover Boy way. A movie like "Cyrano" makes no pretense about its romanticism. "American Guerrilla" is supposed to be realistic—and just isn't.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Of Note

CHRISTIAN POLITICIANS

A NEW quarterly review, *Cross Currents* (420 W. 118th St., New York 27, $3 yearly) aims to do all it can "to oppose the fragmentation of knowledge by bringing together in a single review articles that would otherwise be scattered in publications throughout the world." Articles in the first issue are by Emmanuel Mounier, Gabriel Marcel, Nicholas Berdyaev, Henri de Lubac and others. The following is an excerpt from "What Is Christian Politics?" by Franz Josef Schoeningh, editor of *Hochland.*

> What does the Christian politician do? First and most important he must protect the name of Christ from abuse and guard against unjustifiable appeals to the Gospel. If we observe the Gospel from a political or a cultural point of view, it becomes apparent that in this respect Christ did not want to leave behind any definite pronouncements. He severely embarrassed the Pharisees who wanted to draw Him into a political conflict when He made them produce a coin which bore the image of Caesar, although it was strictly forbidden for Jews to possess any likeness of a human being. Why do you not wish to pay tribute to Caesar when you already carry his image about with you even though it is forbidden? The sublimely ironic answer of Christ rings forth: Render to Caesar those things from which you should have freed yourselves long ago! One can hardly make political matters more relative than in this instance. For this reason all attempts to use the Gospel in politics have ended frightfully. . . .
>
> And so the Christian politician must learn from the spirit of the Gospels the relativity, the fragmentary character of all political phenomena, but from the same spirit he must recognize their factual significance. He must have decided not to surrender the world to the devil in any case. But at the same time he must know that the devil cannot be banished from the world. On this account he must continually ask for the strength to be able to deal with such a world without yielding to it, by being always mindful of the words "Be wise as the serpent and guileless as the dove." At the same time he must be aware that the Prince of this world has his own fifth column, and that the Christian politician can never be certain in which party a devilish game may be played. Consequently he must possess the gift of discernment which enables him to discover in certain circumstances Christ's friends in the opposing party and His enemies within. . . .
>
> He must remain conscious at all times that the Church is Christ living in history, and that the Church, God be thanked, is not identical with administrative authorities, organizations and societies whose outlook and interests occasionally differ sharply from those of the Church. A politics based on Christian conscience can even, under certain circumstances, incur the disapproval of these authorities without ceasing to be a good politics in the Christian sense. Such a politician must have the moral courage to suffer such misunderstandings and misinterpretations in the certainty that one day the correctness of his political decisions will be known as well as the correctness of his high conception of the Christian conscience.
>
> . . . One can even express the apparently paradoxical proposition that his politics will be the better the less he speaks of Christianity and the more he takes to heart in the political field the sentence: one is not known by his party slogans but by his actions.

THE DROP OF THE HAT

AN editorial in the November 4th *Pilot,* publication of the Boston archdiocese, talks about the syndicated columns of Father James Gillis and Mr. Richard L. Stokes.

> The moral angle represented merely provides "the drop of the hat" at which Father Gillis may sing a somewhat familiar song. The melody is of course the usual anti-Roosevelt line. The particular point of the present article is that Mr. Roosevelt was *immoral* in "playing hunches," acting with "hilarity," making "personal appointments" and mistreating his friends. Once again it is said he "fooled or lied" us into the war. One does not have to be an admirer of the late President to get pretty weary of this business and the over-simplified view of history which it represents.
>
> Somewhat similarly, on the opposite page, Mr. Stokes in a considerably more acid style uses the coming election as an opportunity to remind Catholics that the late President handed over "24,000,000 Catholic Poles to Communist oppression." He also sent "Archbishop Stepinatz to a Communist dungeon." The point here is to emphasize the "total indifference" of the Roosevelt-Truman regime to the Catholic Faith. This "indifference" might be better illustrated if Mr. Stokes had included some other matters like the attention given to the Eternal City of Rome during the Italian campaign of World War II or some excerpts from the correspondence of Pius XII with Mr. Roosevelt's personal representative, Mr. Myron Taylor. Nothing like this must be mentioned lest it complicate the picture and make the *easy* solution difficult.
>
> . . . It is much too easy to be brilliant after the battles are over and the complicated issues have been reduced to simplicity. The future of the world and the preservation of the values most precious in it will be best served by those pundits who have the courage to look ahead and plan the ways that are still uncharted.

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Between Two Worlds

By JAMES O'GARA

THERE is, among men of otherwise very divergent opinion, a striking amount of agreement on the proposition that ours is an age of transition. The pains we suffer are the birth pangs of a new world. The question is no longer whether a new society will be born. Rather the crucial questions are these: what shape will the new world take? What spirit will inform and give direction to the new society still locked in the womb of the old?

To such questions no one now living can give the final answer. In her new book, however, Claire Huchet Bishop describes one direction the new world might conceivably take. *All Things Common* (Harper. $3.) is her first-hand account of the Communities of Work which have taken root in Western Europe since the end of the war. Today more than 60 of these experiments in communitarian living exist in France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland.

To call the Communities of Work experiments is possibly somewhat misleading; many of them are thriving concerns. Perhaps they are better described as potential forms of the future. It may not be probable, but it is possible that among the Communities described will be found the seeds of the new society. Because this is so, Communities of Work are important, regardless of number.

To speak of the Communities of Work as a whole is not easy. Although most of them are joined in a loose federation, the central office is little more than a clearing-house and information center. The movement is essentially personalist, and great differences exist from Community to Community.

Some of the Communities are urban and make industrial life their economic expression; others are rural and somewhat resemble agricultural producers' cooperatives. All shades of political opinion and philosophical outlook may be found. Some Communities are frankly Marxist, some are solely Protestant, some are Catholic. Many are mixed, with Catholics, Protestants, Jews, humanists and materialists uniting on a common ethical minimum. Certain basic things all Communities hold in common; perhaps the most important of these is the conviction that a society must be created to work for the development of the whole man, to counter the forces which atomize man's life.

★

THERE is about most of these Communities a refreshing air of realism. Perhaps this impression is received because so many of the Communities described

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are made up of French peasants and workers, almost notoriously hard-headed individuals. Communities of Work may have their own share of the wide-eyed who are attracted to any social movement, but for the most part romanticism rarely raises its pretty little head in the pages of *All Things Common*.

Happily those responsible for the Communities of Work carefully avoid any separatist complex. They see the Community of Work, not as the end of their personal road to the good life, but as the first cell of a new society, as one part of a larger outline yet to come. Indicative of their attitude is the fact that Community members are involved in outside activities such as labor unions; they feel that to follow any other course would be equivalent to making ghettoes of their Communities, and that they do not want.

The approach of the Communities of Work to modern technology is along similar lines. These communitarians are not refugees from the machine; such fugitives will find no congenial home in the Community of Work. These communitarians glory in the machine and its marvels; their only aim is to master it, rather than to be mastered by it.

One central problem the Communities of Work appear largely to have solved: they have recaptured for their members the vital concept of the social nature of work. The sense of community has been restored; each Community of Work constitutes living proof that man works for more than bread alone. The notion of joint effort for the common good, essential for any reform, has come to life in these Communities. If nothing more came of their efforts, this would be accomplishment enough.

★

SO much—and it is a great deal—to their credit. Yet if one is interested in these Communities as the potential forms of a new society, a great deal remains to be entered on the debit side. That this should be the case is certainly understandable. Much of the weakness in the Communities of Work seems traceable to the failures of our own society. To break with the past is not easy, and in certain instances the excesses of the old world appear to have injured the germ plasm of this new form now seeking birth. Abuse in one direction has led to extreme reaction in the other.

A notable example of this is the violent reflex by the Communities completely away from individual ownership of the means of production. What they arrive at is not a form which nicely balances the individual and the social aspects of property, but what they term "social ownership." From this distance, this looks like no ownership at all. In the area of property the solution offered by the Communities of Work seems overly pat, doctrinaire in the extreme. Despite all the abuses of Individualism, ownership of private property can still provide the best material basis for the freedom of the person.

Heady as it may sound, "social ownership" as displayed in the Communities of Work does not seem to provide a long-range solution to our problems. Modern industrialism is sufficiently cursed by anonymous ownership as it is, without further compounding the problem. "Social ownership" in one of our corporate giants would, I think, simply make the economic process even more remote from man than it now is. There is not much point in our exchanging one form of faceless ownership for another.

★

OTHER features of the Communities of Work pose equally vexing problems, if one is thinking in terms of wide-scale application. The attempt by these Communities to measure the social worth of the individual is one example of a procedure that seems potentially very dangerous. Nor does one have to believe that the voice of the majority is the voice of God to see serious problems in the practice within these Communities of requiring absolute unanimity of opinion before action.

The author of *France Alive* is undoubtedly aware of problems, such as these, raised by the Communities of Work. *All Things Common* offers no blanket endorsement of everything the Communities do and stand for; the author is simply reporting what she saw, including in her account both good features and bad. We have much to learn from both the accomplishments and the failures of the Communities of Work. Whether one likes everything about them or not, Communities of Work are facts. And facts, like brickbats, are hard to ignore.

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Books

The Age of Faith. Will Durant. Simon and Schuster. $7.50.

THIS survey of medieval history forms the fourth in the proposed series of six volumes of *The Story of Civilization,* by the author of the onetime best-seller, *The Story of Philosophy.* It is divided into five "Books," each dealing with one general phase of the culture, thought and civilization of the Middle Ages. Although chronological sequence in the narration of events is observed within each "Book," the periods embraced by the second, third and fourth books overlap. In other words it is not and does not purport to be a "chronological" history, but what the author calls an "integral" history of the Middle Ages.

The author writes with a ready pen and a persuasive rhetoric. His style is facile and witty, even sometimes brilliant, and his narrative, though unavoidably superficial, is not disfigured by the grosser errors and prejudices that too frequently have marred the writing on medieval matters of otherwise competent scholars. The late Professor G. G. Coulton of Cambridge comes to mind.

When occasion arises the author makes the most of his opportunities to discuss, at a greater length than one would expect in such a survey, sexual immorality among the people who lived in the several epochs of the medieval period. The result is that undue attention is called to an aspect of medieval life which is of less historical importance, because it was less prevalent, than in other historical periods. Since *The Age of Faith* is "popular" history, written for the general reading public, this may be explained as what film-producers call "box-office."

THE smoothness and persuasive character of the author's style may sometimes conceal the barb that lurks in the end of some sentences or paragraphs, the *venenum in cauda.* For instance: "He [St. Athanasius] stood firm [against the Arian heresy] even when Pope Liberius gave in." The question of Pope Liberius has been so clearly and lucidly dealt with time and time again that it is tedious to discuss it. Another instance: "one can forgive much to a religion and an age that created [*sic*] Mary and her Cathedrals." One could quote not numerous, but too many, such instances.

Obviously widely-read in the best literature about the Middle Ages—though not so obviously erudite in his knowledge of first-hand sources—the author makes what would no doubt be a judicious selection of topics for his work, if it were possible for one man to write such a work as this with anything approaching adequacy.

THE author "was educated in the Catholic parochial schools of North Adams, Massachusetts, and Kearny, New Jersey, and thereafter at St. Peter's (Jesuit) College, Jersey City, and Columbia University, New York. . . . He entered the seminary . . . in 1909, but withdrew in 1911, for reasons which he has described in his book, *Transition.* He passed from a seminary to the radical circles in New York, and became the teacher of the Ferrer School (1911-1913), an experiment in libertarian education. . . . He remained at Columbia University for one year. In 1914 he began, in a Presbyterian church at Fourteenth Street and Second Avenue, New York, those lectures on the history of philosophy and literature which prepared him for *The Story of Philosophy* and *The Story of Civilization.*" (From "A note about the Author.")

This method which the author calls that of "integral history" consists in "the presentation of all phases of a culture or an age in one total picture and narrative." Its purpose is "to cover the economic, political, legal, moral, social, religious, educational, scientific, medical, philosophic, literary and artistic aspects of four distinct civilizations—Byzantine, Islamic, Judaic and West European." His book, as he tells us in his foreword, "aims to give as full and fair an account of Mediaeval Civilization from A.D. 325 to 1300, as space and prejudice will permit."

The limitations of space obviously preclude a *full* treatment of his subject. How far prejudice has prevented a fair treatment may be left to the judgment of the discerning reader. One might well be wary, however, of a history of *The Age of Faith* written by one who had abandoned that "Faith."

DR. DURANT'S account of the origin of the Church is an interesting example of how *fair* the author's prejudice permits him to be (if indeed it be a question of *fairness* rather than of *historical accuracy*). Let me quote. "It [the Church] was at first a simple association of believers, an *ecclesia* or gathering. Each *ecclesia* or church chose one or more *presbyteroi*—elders, priests—to lead them, and one or more readers, acolytes, subdeacons, and deacons to assist the priest. As the worshipers grew in number, and their affairs became more complex, the congregations chose a priest or layman in each city to be an *episcopos*—overseer, bishop—to co-ordinate their functioning. As the number of bishops grew, they in turn required supervision and co-ordination; in the fourth century we hear of archbishops, metropolitans, or primates governing the bishops and the churches of a province. Over all these grades of clergy patriarchs held sway at Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome." A strange account indeed in the ears of those who have read about Christ and His Apostles in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, about the foundation of the Church on Peter the Rock ("on that rock of hope [the early Christians' hope] the Church was built," says our author), of the laying on of hands by Peter and the Apostles to ordain and commission their successors the bishops, and the priests and deacons of the Church! A strange confusion between the history of lawful jurisdiction within the *established* Church with its very *establishment!*

But one whose views on the nature of the Church lean towards the (quite unmedieval) tenets of Presbyterian

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theology, might be understandably inclined towards such a misreading of history. That, however, would not appreciably increase one's confidence in his general interpretation of the history of the thought and culture of the Middle Ages, despite his frequent eulogies of the many things he finds to admire in that long period of history.

GERALD B. PHELAN.

Burning Bright. John Steinbeck. Viking. $2.50.

AS A PLAY, "Burning Bright" lasted eleven days on Broadway. The critics found it artificial, pretentious, and filled with pseudo-poetic dialogue that hit the ears with the effect of "chalk squealing on a slate." As Walter Kerr noted in his drama review, Mr. Steinbeck had junked reality and flown off, rather shakily, into the unrewarding abstract.

Burning Bright has also been published as a novel, or in Mr. Steinbeck's term, a play-novelette. The novel was written first, with the intention of transforming it into a play simply by lifting out the dialogue and turning the descriptive passages into stage directions. Some minor line-changes were made in rehearsal—one of them, Mr. Steinbeck relates, with the help of some Yale students who saw the try-out in New Haven and left a note at the box office—but the book remains substantially the novel version of the play. The same flaws that the drama critics hopped on so vigorously are of course present — the arty dialogue, the removal from reality, the shallowness of characterization reminiscent of an Arbor Day pageant.

But in novel form, some of these faults are less disquieting. The reader, more than the playgoer, is used to poetic language and artificial constructions. He accepts phrases like "I've got a rustle in me" or "the loneliness we wear like icy clothes" or "we were the only gay in that laughter-starving time." And without the painful sound of the play, Mr. Steinbeck's dramatized idea is almost moving. Joe Saul, who is unable to have the child he passionately craves to carry on his line, comes to accept as his son his wife's child by another man; he learns that a child is not "a piece of private property, registered and fenced and separated," but a shining being, a part of indestructible humanity.

Nevertheless, with all the grandeur of the idea, and the greater tolerance of the eye than the ear, the book is hung up on the same basic flaw—the morality-play abstractness of the characters. In one of his earliest novels, the little noted and long forgotten *To a God Unknown,* Mr. Steinbeck had a previous whirl at heavy symbolism. Another guy named Joe, consumed with a passion for fertility —fertility of the land rather than his own fertility—was loaded down with the responsibility of being "a repository for a little piece of each man's soul, and more than that, a symbol of the earth's soul." Mr. Steinbeck recovered to write *Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men.*

CAROL H. WEISS.

War and Human Progress. John U. Nef. Harvard. $6.50.

DURING the last century it was considered smart to reduce the events of human history to a very simple causal nexus. When Karl Marx imposed the doctrine that spiritual and intellectual life are nothing but a superstructure changed with each change of the production system, he oversimplified history in the crudest way, but in a practical way stressed the trends that lead from the material to the intellectual life, which had been neglected by previous historians. Those who tried to discover the key to history in race or climate, in ideologies or in certain psychological developments, over-emphasized their points in an absurd way, but nevertheless provided future generations with some serious food for thought and by this with a deeper insight into the complex ways of mankind.

On the other hand, the study of history has been enriched by considerable specialization during the last century and a half. The mass of knowledge discovered by scholars in all fields of historical research waits for a synthesis not narrowed by arbitrary doctrines, but fused into a general view that evaluates in a catholic way all the interrelations between the diverse fields of human activity.

The Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago has furthered for some time historical research that moves in this direction. Professor John U. Nef enjoyed the help of this committee and of the Rockefeller Foundation in his most interesting studies.

It is certainly not a new observation that the wars of the eighteenth century were less destructive and demanded fewer victims than those of Napoleon. In the mercenary armies the replacement of "human material" was difficult and time-consuming and each defeat was followed by large desertions. Thus the military leaders of the eighteenth century avoided decisive battles, tried to out-maneuver the enemy, to cut him off from his food supplies, etc.

The conscription of the French revolution, later imitated by all great powers, made the "human material" expendable and developed a new war tactic of merciless annihilation. These facts have been developed at great length and with admirable lucidity by the German historian Hans Delbrueck in his *History of the Art of War,* completed in the days of the First World War. Nef is full of praise for Delbrueck and accepts his basic points of view, but he has supplemented them with many new features and observations from both older and more recent literature.

NEF'S book is an impressive warning against the tendency to oversimplify historical dynamics: the triumph of industrial civilization, regarded by many authors as a simple line of progress, is unveiled in its ambiguity. While the economic development of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries had been a factor working toward European cultural community, the much more rapid and much more diffused industrialization of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led toward

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disunity and intellectual confusion. Nef stresses the role of the European secularization in the dissolution of the religious and cultural bonds of society.

The author has collected interesting details in the complicated cross currents between warfare and intellectual life, between violence and culture. He tells, for instance, the story of the bayonet, the cruel weapon of hand-to-hand combat which horrified the philosophers of the eighteenth century. In spite of this "technical improvement," other factors encouraged the fight carried on at a distance, as soldiers always prefer to shoot at unseen enemies, rather than to kill those whom they look at, eye to eye. There were impatient generals who disliked the neglect of this new bayonet, but evidently other motivations had a stronger influence than this technical improvement. By increasing for the killer the ghastliness of his act, the bayonet helped to keep contending armies apart and to make battles milder. This is an interesting example of the complex history of warfare and its deep roots in the emotions of man.

The author submits modern cultural life to a severe analysis and questions the illusion of continuous human progress. He points to the shameful expansion of the noisy and the superficial, of an intellectual life influenced by the charlatan, the vulgarian and the dictator.

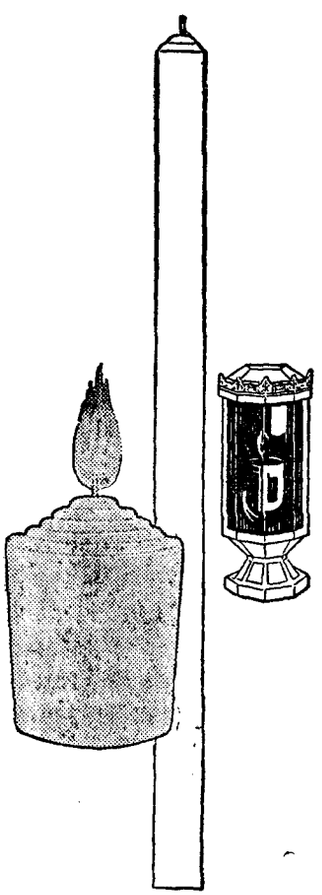
In his conclusion, Mr. Nef faces the problem of how we can end the intellectual road to war and overcome the destruction and violence of our age. He sees clearly that we pay for the technical progress of the industrial revolution with total war. He is aware that we face a moral problem, that the secularization of Europe has been a road to the abyss.

The author does not speak out in positive terms as to how we can escape the dilemma of our time. But in spite of the desperately distorted figures of Picasso on the jacket of this book, we have the impression that Mr. Nef believes in conquering the crisis by the de-secularization and re-Christianization of our cultural life.

MAX FISCHER.

Blandings' Way. Eric Hodgkins. Simon and Schuster. $3.

THIS is the intellectual, and really, the moral history of the Mr. Blandings who built a dream house. He is an extremely successful advertising man who abandons his art to satisfy the persistent and disquieting urges he feels to fulfil a social responsibility; to do something constructive to compensate for the basically degrading career at which he has been so successful. He has made his modest fortune by creating a three-word slogan which lifted an obscure laxative to a place of world economic dominance that, in its own field, approached that of Shell Oil. He kept that fortune replenished by writing things which made it socially



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desirable, prestige-laden, *distinguished,* to drink a vile, possibly poisonous, domestic whiskey. Mr. Blandings eventually looked into his heart and withdrew from advertising to become a country editor.

Mr. Hodgkins is someone else who has gone serious. This novel is certainly funny; it has some ruthless satire (not the conventional burlesque) of the pomposity and egocentricity of the advertising profession and of the *New Yorker's* world. But it is fundamentally an incisive and rather serious book, and I am sure that Mr. Hodgkins intends it seriously. What he says is deliberately ambiguous rather than profound, but it puts a crucial personal (and social) question out where some people may trip over it, and think about it, and probably despair over it in a business-like way, as does Mr. Blandings.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

De La Salle, Saint and Spiritual Writer. W. J. Battersby. Longmans. $2.50.

IN 1553 Rabelais died. Whatever else he may have been—and he has been hailed as one of the great humanist liberators by historians, clerics, and philosophers, not to mention innumerable pornographers — I think we may safely say that he is an accurate symbol of late Renaissance humanism. His death marked the close of an age in which naturalism had been completely exploited, and it marked, too, the beginning of another, equally disturbing age.

In the arc of the historical pendulum, France in one century pledged complete allegiance to unbridled passion, and in the next erected a code of morality suppressing all natural tendencies, even the most innocent. Now it is rather evident on investigation that it was the extremist humanism of Rabelais (which is light years removed from the "integral humanism" of Vives or Vittorino) that begot, as a reaction to its excessive tendencies, the anti-humanism of Port Royal. Similarly, in a very true sense the Abbey of La Trappe is the logical historic successor to the Abbey of Thélème; and *fay ce que vouldras* is the necessary progenitor of De La Salle's cryptic: *la nature détruit la grâce.*

IN any evaluation of De La Salle and his work it is difficult to avoid the clichéd idiom of traditional hagiography. For of all the saints of this age—and there were many—De La Salle is certainly the least romantic in appeal. He had no contact with the nobility as did Vincent de Paul and John Eudes; he projected no new techniques of spirituality as did M. Olier and Grignon de Montfort. And even in his personal religious observances he innovated nothing. This latter fact is yet more startling when we recall that he lived in an age when innumerable new devotions were being propagated as a result of the clerical reforms of Bérulle. Similarly, in his educational works, we know now that he was guided more by contemporary documents and the exigencies of the day-to-day situation than by any newly elaborated theories of instruction.

If De La Salle was so definitely not a religious or educational genius, what is his importance? To this question, I believe there are a number of answers. Just as M. Maritain has seen Molina as the symbol of the theological spirit of the "Christian gentleman of the classical age, and Jansenism as the theology of the Christian magistrate of the same age," so also, I think, De La Salle, in no pejorative sense, may be said to represent all those elements which characterize the religious spirit of this period.

Never deviating to one extreme or another, De La Salle adheres to the core of seventeenth-century spirituality and represents in his own person the best traits of what Brémond has called "the most Theocentric school of religious thought in the post-Reformation period." While maintaining the beautiful Patristic teaching, revived by Bérulle, of the perpetual efficacy of the actions of Christ, the Saint strenuously avoided the pessimism which tainted this doctrine as developed by de Condren, Bérulle's successor in the Oratory. And, although he himself was of an austere disposition, De La Salle never was influenced either by the rigorous orthodox reforms of an Abbot de Rancé, or the heretical severities of the solitaries of Port Royal. In an age when the primacy of the Roman Pontiff was frequently questioned, the Saint stands as a symbol of loyalty to the Holy See. And it is one of the interesting points brought out by Dr. Battersby, for our own period of renewed liturgical effort, that De La Salle in his mother house prescribed the Roman ritual rather than the Gallican rite then used in the diocese of Rouen.

Finally, De La Salle may be said to represent that close union of the contemplative and the active life which is, perhaps, the dominant trait and first glory of the mystics of the French School of Spirituality. However, it is on this very theme that the present biography falters. It seems to me that the author, who is in general exceptionally accurate in delineating historical trends, falls into a common error when he writes of De La Salle: "There was a strong strain of mysticism in him, and he was capable of sublime devotions, but he kept his feet on the ground." It is not the pun which I find questionable, but the assumption that mysticism implies impracticality. Father Garrigou-Lagrange has been pointing out in his repetitive way that mysticism properly understood is simply the fullness of the development of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and should not be equated with the extraordinary charismatic gifts sometimes accompanying it. Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in this case at least, is merely the resonator of the majority of contemporary theologians, hence it is unfortunate that Dr. Battersby becomes preoccupied with the ascetic character of his subject—as if asceticism could be an end in itself.

THE primary lesson of this saint's life is not piety, nor charity, nor patience, nor a host of other virtues he may have possessed, but the lesson of courage; the courage which so frequently is lacking in our timorous Catholic proletariat, or which so frequently is confused with blustering

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self-assertiveness—the courage to respond to the demands of a concrete situation, and to do the work which Providence has designed.

BROTHER JUSTUS GEORGE, F.S.C.

Neuroses and Sacraments. Alan Keenan, O.F.M. Sheed & Ward. $2.50.

THIS slender volume discusses in a readable, stimulating, and often profound manner the nature of the sacraments and the role they play in the life of a Christian. Though concerned mainly with "neurotics," the comments by Father Keenan are, perhaps, even more valuable for "normal" people. It is not only the neurotic who has an insufficient comprehension of the sacraments and their efficacy.

The essence of neurosis is seen in a withdrawal from reality of which one cause—as the author prudently states—is the failure to seek a final end. Without such an end, human existence sooner or later suffers shipwreck. This is perfectly true. The problem, however, is to discover why a man cannot strive for such an end. It would seem that in many cases the approach suggested by the author is too much of a short cut. Before the arguments and admonitions so ably proposed become effective a good deal of preparatory work has to be done. There is, however, no doubt that Father Keenan's book will do much good and will be read with great profit by all sorts of people, whether neurotics or not, psychologists or educators, priests or laymen.

RUDOLF ALLERS.

Champion Road. Frank Tilsley. Julian Messner. $3.50.

MR. TILSLEY'S new novel demonstrates once more that a novel filled with the details of day-to-day existence is the most accurate, most meaningless, and least interesting reflection of life. Like every career, that of the hero, Jonathan Briggs, contains much that is dull and insignificant, and the author faithfully includes it all. The terms of business agreements are recounted endlessly, and conversations are monotonously realistic.

In his successful struggle to rise from a newsboy in a small Lancashire town to a position of power, Jonathan displays qualities more objectionable than his conceit. His questionable business practices, his frequent love affairs, his ruthlessness toward anyone who stands in his way, are calculated to create the picture of a virile and somewhat attractive scoundrel. Somehow this effort fails, and Jonathan's final loyalty to his wife and his refusal to profit by the black market appear inconsistent rather than admirable.

Some of the other characters are more successfully realized. Nellie, Jonathan's wife, "honest and homely

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as a newly laundered sheet," is a sharp, unpleasant yet memorable person. His grandfather, after the manner of grandfathers in popular novels, proves to be not the penniless cynic everyone believed but the possessor of a heart of gold and a considerable amount of money. Jonathan's numerous business transactions introduce an excessive number of characters, and the result is a comprehensive if somewhat confused picture of England during the first half of the century. *Champion Road* is a photograph in words—complete, truthful, yet devoid of the significance which a more selective artist would convey.

CATHERINE ANN CLINE.

Fifth Chinese Daughter. Jade Snow Wong. Harper. $3.

"YOU must put on your shoes first," said Jade Snow to her baby brother.

"No, first you must seek the Kingdom of God. That is what Daddy says," protested Prosperity-from-Heaven.

Jade Snow Wong was born in San Francisco's Chinatown where her father, a devout Methodist, ran an overall factory. Business and family life were under the same roof; Mrs. Wong stepped from her kitchen to her machine and the little Wongs played with the workers' children under the cutting tables. Determined to have a college education, Jade Snow worked her way, without help from her family, through high school and gained a scholarship at Mills College where she graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa. She set about earning some ready cash by making pottery and setting up her potter's wheel in a shop window she not only collected curious crowds but sold her wares. Miss Wong has now made quite a reputation for herself as an artist in ceramics and has reconciled her family to the independence of American women.

Jade Snow's story is a study of the conflict in the lives of Chinatown's younger generation—a conflict between the weight of Chinese tradition and the freedom of American ways. In deference to Chinese literary usages, the story is told in the third person which, in English, unfortunately makes it seem self-conscious. Jade Snow must be a fine and serious young woman, but the imagination which must be present in her pottery is not discernible in her writing. Nor does humor seem to be part of her Cantonese heritage.

E.V.R. WYATT.

Water, Land, and People. Bernard Frank and Anthony Netboy. Knopf. $4.

A SOUND and comprehensive study of the most crucial task in conserving our natural resources. There are many new industrial uses and the water requirements of the American city-dweller have increased six-fold since 1900.

• REVIEWERS •

REV. GERALD B. PHELAN is Director of the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame and formerly was president of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto.

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CATHERINE ANN CLINE is doing graduate work at Bryn Mawr.

E.V.R. WYATT is the drama critic for *The Catholic World.*

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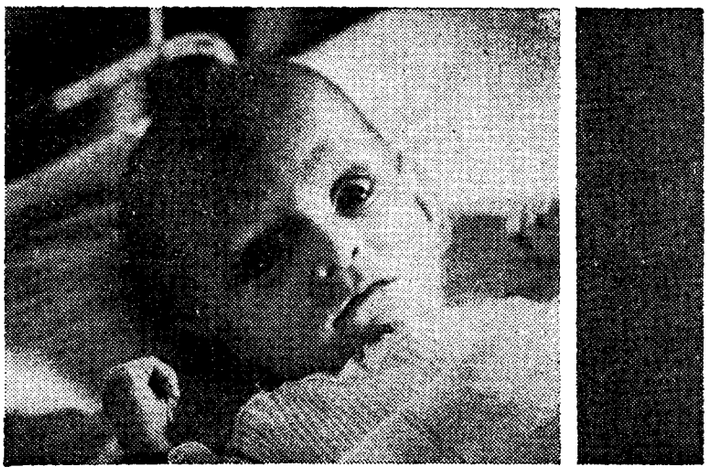

Science has come a long way since 1940. In the field of medicine, alone, the discovery of the "wonder drugs" and entirely new techniques of treatment have given hope of recovery from diseases that were previously termed incurable. Yet for more than ten years, much of our world has been completely out of touch with the advances that have been made in medicine...in engineering...in agriculture...in other sciences. They need our knowledge...to save lives, to rebuild factories, to help them feed themselves.

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